

**SB 5499-S.E - DIGEST**

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Clarifies and standardizes various election procedures.

Directs the secretary of state to study the feasibility of requiring that the names of the top two vote-getters in primary elections of justices of the state supreme court, judges of the courts of appeals, superior courts, and district courts, and the superintendent of public instruction shall appear on the general election ballot. The study shall include a survey of how many times a judicial candidate and a candidate for superintendent of public instruction have appeared without opposition on the general election ballot from 1985 to present; the number of voters voting for these races in the primary election as opposed to voting for the same races in the general election; and if the differences in the numbers of voters voting at the primary and voting at the general election may have resulted in a different election result. The study shall also include a financial analysis of the proposed changes. The secretary of state shall report the results of the study to the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than January 31, 2006.

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5499-S

May 3, 2005

To the Honorable President and Members,  
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Section 4, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5499 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to election reform."

This bill reforms and strengthens our election system. As one of its priorities, our Legislature has passed several bills on election reform. Many of those bills have reached my desk for signature. Section 4 of this bill is essentially identical to Section 21 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5743, which I also sign today. The only difference between the two bills is their effective date. Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5499 becomes effective in 90 days. Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5743 becomes effective on January 1, 2006.

The above-noted bill sections concern absentee ballot envelopes, and the declarations required on those envelopes. As certain rural counties have already begun purchasing envelopes for this year's election cycle, and in light of limited funds to purchase new envelopes, it would create unnecessary hardship to require them to immediately purchase new return envelopes under Section 4 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5499. I am therefore vetoing Section 4 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5499.

This veto does not take away the strong warnings on absentee ballot return envelopes concerning the need for voters to return them in timely fashion. It just gives our cash-strapped rural county auditors an additional six months to comply with the new envelope requirements.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Section 4 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5499

With the exception of Section 4, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5499 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor